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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 18 February 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you to draw your attention to and officially document the brutal crimes that continue to be perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Week after week, these letters are written in the hope that the atrocities mentioned will evoke a responsible, action-oriented response from the international community. This week is no different as we continue to call attention to these egregious Israeli violations and crimes against our people and continue to call for protection and measures to hold Israel accountable for its crimes, including war crimes against our people.

First, in follow-up to our previous letter, dated 11 February, I must recall the situation of the Palestinian journalist, Mohammed Al-Qiq, age 33, who is now in the 86th day of a hunger strike in protest against his administrative detention by Israel, the occupying Power, without charge. His plight remains grave, as his health continues to deteriorate sharply, and he is facing imminent death. We call on the international community to take all measures to compel the occupying Power to release Mr. Al-Qiq and to end its illegal use of administrative detention, by which the occupying Power is holding more than 530 Palestinians without charge or trial for periods of up to six months, renewable indefinitely, among the more than 6,000 Palestinian civilians it is illegally incarcerating and abusing in its jails. In this regard, the ongoing daily arrest raids by the Israeli occupying forces continue to add more and more innocent Palestinian civilians, including children and youth, to the ranks of those being brutally imprisoned and detained by the occupying Power.

Today, I must also again highlight that incitement by high-ranking Israeli officials against the entire Palestinian population continues unabated and continues to fuel intolerance and hate among the Israeli public. On Tuesday, 16 February, during an Israeli Knesset meeting, the Israeli Prime Minister declared that

Palestinian "terror" came from a "culture of death" among Palestinian society. Such deplorable statements by the occupying Power, which dehumanizes the Palestinian people under its occupation, have fostered a culture of hatred and the demeaning of Palestinian lives that has allowed Israeli occupying forces to shoot and kill Palestinian civilians, including children, execution-style, in broad daylight, without any concern for accountability and without conscience.

Just one of the latest tragic examples of this prevalent disregard for Palestinian life is the shooting that critically injured Yasmin Rashad Al-Zarou Al-Tamimi, age 21, in Al-Khalil on Sunday, 14 February 2016. Yasmin and her sister had crossed an Israeli military checkpoint, and after they had walked a few metres past the checkpoint, Israeli occupying forces deliberately fired at Yasmin. Videos surfaced of her lying on the ground bleeding from multiple gunshots. The shooting of Yasmin occurred hours after occupying forces had shot and killed a Palestinian boy, Na'eem Ahmad Youssef Safi, age 17, at an Israeli checkpoint north of Bethlehem, along with two other Palestinian boys, Nehad Ra'ed Waked, age 15, and Fo'ad Marwan Waked, age 15, who were shot and killed by occupying forces near the village of Al-Araqa, west of Jenin.

The killings of these young Palestinians, among so many who have recently had their lives so callously taken and who lived their entire lives under this brutal occupation, are further proof of the occupying Power's complete disregard for the sanctity of Palestinian life. Clearly, the occupying Power believes that as long as it can falsely accuse Palestinians of trying to "harm" an Israeli soldier — fully armed with the latest and most lethal military weaponry, along with the most sophisticated protective gear and armoured vehicles, and imposing the occupation in the most inhumane and humiliating ways — their crimes will not be questioned, nor will they ever be held accountable or punished for the clearly established policy of "shooting to kill" Palestinians. The fact remains that the international community's inaction has helped to foster, rather than to curb, this appalling culture of impunity that prevails throughout the ranks of the Israeli occupying forces, fully backed by the Israeli Government in word and deed, which we continue to witness on a daily and shocking basis.

Below are just some of the innumerable crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in the period since our previous letter to you:

11 February 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces shot and injured three Palestinians during a raid into Beit Duqqu village, north-west of Jerusalem.

13 February 2016:

- Israeli naval boats launched heavy machine gun fire on Palestinian fishermen offshore north of the blockaded Gaza Strip.

14 February 2016:

- Occupying forces shot and killed Na'eem Ahmad Youssef Safi (age 17) at a checkpoint east of Bethlehem.
- Occupying forces fatally shot Nehad Ra'ed Waked (age 15) and Fo'ad Marwan Waked (age 15) near the village of Al-Araqa, west of Jenin.

- A 12-year-old student was run over by an Israeli military jeep during clashes that erupted with demonstrating students at the entrance of Al-Arroub refugee camp, north of Al-Khalil.
- Israeli occupying forces detained seven Palestinians from across the West Bank.
- Occupying forces shot and killed a Palestinian girl, Kalzar Mohammed Al-Uweiwi (age 18) at the entrance of Bab Al-Khan in Al-Sahla neighbourhood, near Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil.
- Yasmin Rashad Al-Zarou Al-Tamimi (age 21) was seriously injured after being shot by Israeli occupying forces near Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil.
- Occupying forces shot and killed two Palestinian youths, Mansour Yasser Shawamreh (age 20) and Omar Mohammed Amr (age 20), at Bab Al-Amoud, in Occupied East Jerusalem.

15 February 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces demolished 20 Palestinian dwellings in Ein Al-Rushrash, a locality to the south-east of Duma village, south of Nablus.
- Occupying forces detained 22 Palestinians from Ramallah, Al-Bireh and Nablus in the West Bank.
- 22 Palestinians were injured after occupying forces stormed Al-Amaari refugee camp, Ramallah.

16 February 2016:

- Israeli occupying forces, using live fire, shot and injured Ahmad Bilal Zaytoon (age 24) in the city of Nablus.
- Israeli settlers under the protection of occupying forces entered Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Occupied East Jerusalem, inflaming tensions.
- Occupying forces detained nine Palestinians during predawn raids across the West Bank.

17 February 2016:

- Occupying forces demolished several agricultural and industrial structures in Al-Issawiya, on the outskirts of Occupied East Jerusalem, to establish a national park to serve illegal Israeli settlers.
- Israeli gunboats opened fire on Palestinian fishermen offshore from the Gaza Strip.
- Occupying forces destroyed hundreds of dunums of agricultural crops near Yatta, south of Al-Khalil.
- Occupying forces detained 20 Palestinians, including three children, in raids in the West Bank.

Surely, the long list of crimes mentioned above serves as further evidence that the failure to enact consequences for Israel's violations and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, has clearly resulted in the loss of more and more Palestinian lives, including children. We thus reiterate

our urgent appeal to the Security Council to not only discuss but to act forthwith to uphold its Charter duties and take the necessary action to protect the Palestinian civilian population and to bring this illegal Israeli aggression and occupation in all of its manifestations to an end, in line with the relevant provisions and principles of international law and the countless relevant United Nations resolutions, including of the Security Council.

The international community cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this injustice and cannot justify continued inaction by the Council on this matter that is clearly within its purview, has been on the United Nations agenda since its inception, constitutes a threat to international peace and security and has already destroyed so many lives across multiple generations and caused innumerable tragedies and crises. The time to act, with responsibility and conscience, is long overdue and of utmost urgency if we are to avert the complete destabilization of the situation and the closure of the minute window for peace that remains, and if we are to provide hope to the Palestinian people that their long struggle for the realization of their rights and legitimate national aspirations, including for independence, will be fulfilled and will provide future generations of Palestinians and Israelis with the peace, security and coexistence they seek.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 574 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 11 February 2016 (A/ES-10/711-S/2016/135) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations